

Enhancing Relationships

Deciding if an issue
is worth raising



Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program

William S. Middleton VA Hospital
2500 Overlook Terrace
Madison, WI 53705
608-280-7084

How do I decide that?

- ◆ Consider how close to your core the issue is.
- ◆ Consider how important the relationship is to you.
- ◆ Consider how serious the consequences might be if you ignore it.
- ◆ Consider how likely it is that this issue will come up again.



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What do you mean by core issues

- How deep does the hurt go? How important is this issue in terms of who you are?
- For example, if your partner doesn't shut the cabinet doors that is probably just an irritant, not a core issue.
- If your partner consistently lies to you, that diminishes your ability to trust. That is a core issue.



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***I think I get it about
how important the
relationship is***

- ◆ Yeah. If it's the city bus driver, you may choose to not deal with the conflict. If it's your best friend, you risk losing more by ignoring it.
- ◆ Also consider how important a function the person plays, not just how close you feel. A misunderstanding with the grocer is not as big a problem as a misunderstanding with your boss even though you may not feel close to your boss.



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What's an example of weighing the consequences?

- If the issue is that your mother keeps fixing peas for you when you visit, even though you don't enjoy them, the consequence of not mentioning it is minor.
- If, however, your mother drives drunk with your child in the car, the risk of serious consequences is great and you should resolve the issue.

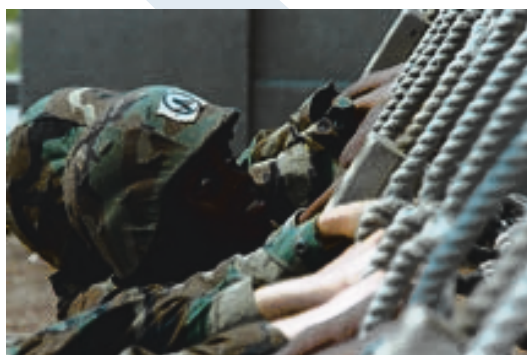


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***You said consider
how likely it is to
come up again***

- For example, if a neighbor has a loud party on the first night they move in, you may decide it's not worth discussing it.
- If the same same neighbor has a loud party every weekend, it makes more sense to address the issue with them.



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Okay. If I decide it's important enough to deal with, then what?

- ◆ One approach would be using assertive communication, like the example we gave earlier about coming home late from work.
- ◆ People often misunderstand this, so let's take some time to clarify what we mean when we talk about assertiveness:
 - Exercising your legitimate rights
 - Saying no
 - Requesting help from others
 - Clarifying and resolving conflicts
 - Getting heard



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